

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM
IDENTIFICATION FORM

AGENCY INFORMATION

AGENCY : NSC
RECORD NUMBER : 145-10001-10269
RECORDS SERIES :
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 148

Released under the John
F. Kennedy
Assassination Records
Collection Act of 1992
(44 USC 2107 Note).
Case#:NW 54214 Date:
10-04-2017

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

ORIGINATOR : NSC
FROM : MAXWELL TAYLOR
TO : THE PRESIDENT
TITLE : MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT
DATE : 09/27/62
PAGES : 2
SUBJECTS : THE SPECIAL GROUP (AUGMENTED) AND THE SPECIAL GROUP
(5412)

OPERATION MONGOOSE AND PROGRAM AGAINST VIETNAM

DOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT
CLASSIFICATION :
RESTRICTIONS : 1A, 4
CURRENT STATUS : RELEASED WITH DELETIONS
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 02/17/98
OPENING CRITERIA :
COMMENTS :

NO JOINT STAFF OBJECTION
TO DECLASSIFICATION

MAR 2016
DATE: _____

[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

27 September 1962

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

The Special Group (Augmented) and the Special Group (5412) took the following actions at their meetings today:

1. MONGOOSE

In accordance with an earlier request by the Group, a proposal for the use of balloons to drop propaganda leaflets, and possibly other small objects of propaganda value, over Cuba was discussed. The Group approved the concept, subject to presentation of a more detailed operational plan.

In brief this operation would involve the release from a small boat, on a periodic basis, of small balloons which would overfly Cuba at night and would drop propaganda materials through the means of a timing device. The Group felt that such an operation should be conducted ostensibly by Cuban exiles, with close policy control behind the scenes. The latter would include approval of the content of the propaganda through secure contact with the Cubans involved. Reliable weather and other technical information would be provided.

CIA has built up a considerable body of technical know-how on operations of the type, from previous activities of a similar nature in Europe.

2. Program Against Vietnam

The Group considered a proposal by CIA for covert activities designed to harass the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This had been prepared in response to a request by the Secretaries of State and Defense.

The Special Group asked that a more detailed operational plan be prepared. In the meantime it was agreed that Defense will make certain equipment and personnel available to CIA in support of this program. An Elint flight designed to identify the North Vietnamese radar order of battle, so as to permit planning of overflight routes, was authorized. This will be flown out of Saigon, using the specially-equipped aircraft available on Taiwan, but with the Chinese Air Force markings removed, and employing Chinese Nationalist pilots documented as South Vietnamese citizens.

148

3. Stay-Behind Planning, Laos

The Group approved a CIA proposal for stay-behind activities in Laos, involving Meo and Kha tribesmen. The mission of these individuals, who have already been trained and equipped, will be basically restricted to the collection of intelligence and the securing of safe areas.

The plan is to a considerable extent contingent on the Thais agreeing to allow small numbers of their "special force" personnel to remain in the area. It is proposed to leave two Americans in the north with the Meos, and one in the south with the Khas. It was the firm consensus of the Group that unless Americans remain behind, there is no possibility of inducing the Thais to leave their own personnel there.

16,17
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